Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

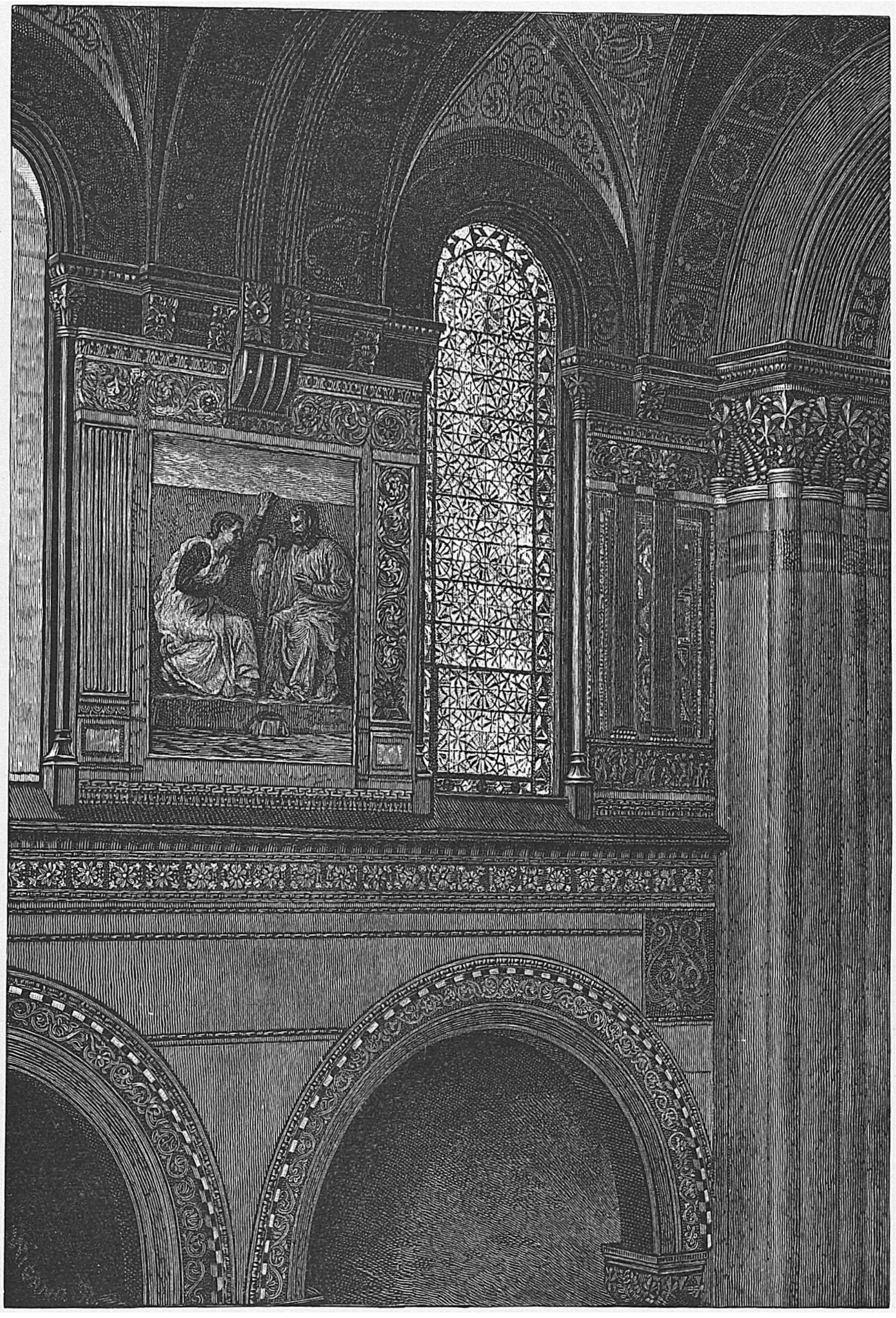
This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



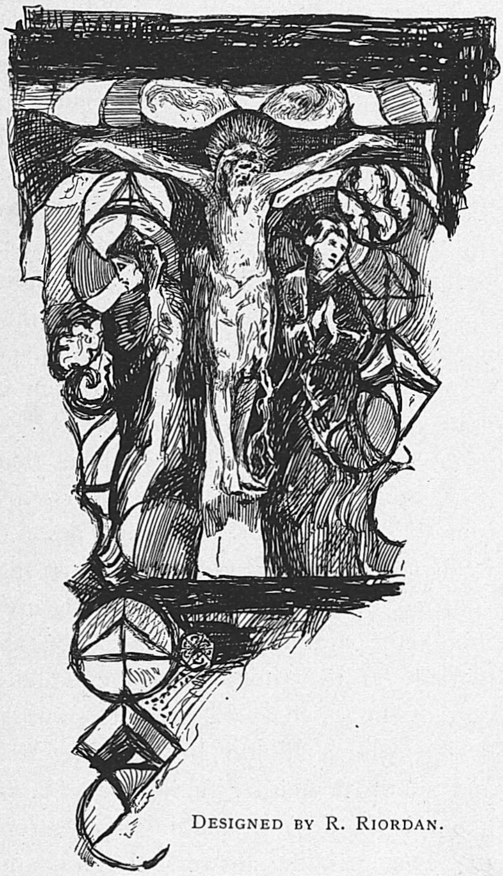
STAINED GLASS WINDOW IN TRINITY CHURCH, BOSTON.

DESIGNED BY JOHN LA FARGE.

ENGRAVED BY OTTO C. WIGAND.—FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

AMERICAN STAINED GLASS.

Second Article.



Designed by R. Riordan.

TRINITY CHURCH, Boston, in addition to its architectural merits and the wealth of ornamentation which Mr. La Farge has lavished on its interior, contains what will probably be considered in the near future as the first example of an American school of stained glass. The beautiful grisaille window shown in the accompanying woodcut is in fact the first now extant which was designed by Mr. La Farge, and consequently the first which we owe to an American of any prominence as an artist, for Mr. Tiffany did not enter the field until some time later. The failure of the other windows, in the modern English style, to harmonize with the mural decorations, was what caused Mr. La Farge seriously to turn his attention to the making of stained glass, and the first fruit of this was the strikingly successful window in question, the only one in the church which is in keeping with the general scheme. It was made as an experiment, of the cheapest pot-metal, painted and put together in the simplest manner, yet the effect is as admirable as it is unique. It was not designed for its present position, and therefore does not give to the full the effect of pearly light, at once illumining and toning the wall decoration, which it ought to produce. Still the eye instinctively turns to that part of the building where it is situated, finding there a degree of completeness and harmony of which the other windows rob the rest of the interior. In mediæval churches either the wall decoration was distinctly subordinated to the glass, or an attempt was made by the use of the strongest and most brilliant tones, often glazed over gold, to bring it up to the same pitch of power and luminosity. At the same time the intensity of the glass was lowered, as described in the first article, by the application of the brown enamel; still it was impossible to completely harmonize it with the wall surfaces. For this reason the borders of the windows are in all mediæval work a very prominent part of the design, and the outer edge was almost invariably left white. The two incongruous elements of the decoration were thus kept separate from one another, and the eye was not offended by the immediate contrast of the strongest tones of the glass with the necessarily darker wall paintings. The trouble was, however, still so apparent, that it certainly had its share in bringing about the final disuse of stained glass; and if the reader will bear in mind that the problem presented to Mr. La Farge by his own previously executed work in

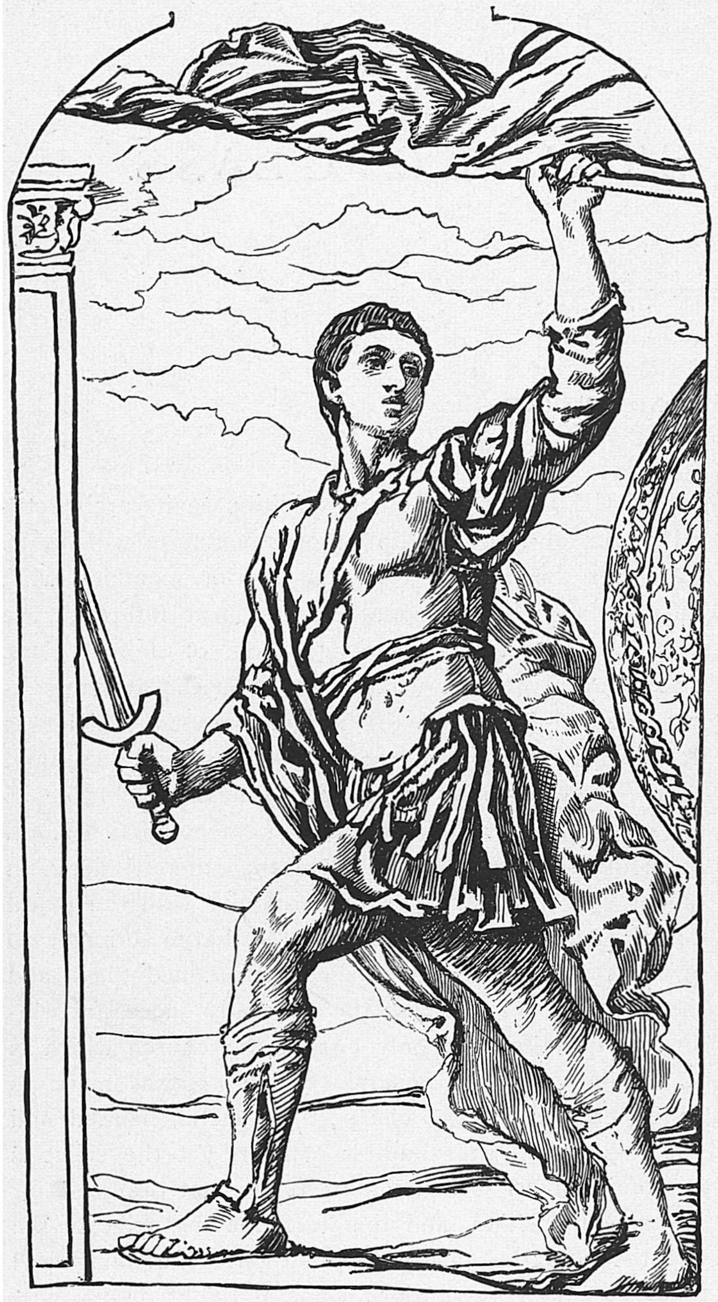


Fig. 1.—DESIGN FOR HARVARD MEMORIAL WINDOW.
BY JOHN LA FARGE.—DRAWN BY WILL H. LOW.

Trinity Church was even more embarrassing, though not, as it turned out, so hopeless, and that it was solved with perfect success, he will begin to perceive why it is that this hundred-dollar window, made with a little cheap glass and some brown paint, should be worthy of attention even now, when so much has been done by Tiffany, La Farge himself, and others, and when so much more may be confidently looked forward to. The general tone of the interior of Trinity Church is rich and mellow, but not overpowering or "heady." Highly finished figure subjects like that of Christ and the woman of Samaria, which is shown in our illustration, form the most striking part of it. It is evident that no similar subjects should be introduced in the windows, for while, owing to their brilliancy, they might distract attention from the wall paintings, they could not possibly compare with them in expressive power, even if done by the same hand. It is the worst fault of the other windows that they are thus unsuited to their surroundings. In color, also, they are too weak and glaring, and while the strong coloring of the mediæval glass, if anything comparable with it had been attainable at the time, would be equally out of key, what was wanted was a design which should be at once rich and subdued, neither falling behind the general scheme nor standing apart from it. The grisaille answers these conditions; the other windows do not, and are a positive eyesore. The complicated wheel-work of Mr. La Farge's window serves to continue the convolutions of the painted mouldings and friezes which lead up to it. Though only black and white, it positively has more value as color than the stained glass windows near it, and its ornament is so disposed as to lead the eye gently across it, and allow it to dwell at full leisure on the more important wall paintings.

Mr. La Farge had, however, made an earlier attempt in stained glass, which it is important to mention, as it led him to the adoption on a large scale, in his subsequent work, of what is practically a new material,—opal glass. He had, while still engaged on the frescos of Trinity, begun to make a small colored window from specimen pieces of glass which he had collected, combined with thin slices of onyx and other semi-precious stones to give the richness that was then unattainable with the best modern glass to be found. Some pieces of opal glass accidentally produced at one of our glass-houses were found to be a good substitute for the onyx. He tried to get the glass-makers to make him some in panes. The process was perfectly simple, but was not apparently believed in. The window was abandoned.

Next came the commission for the Harvard memorial window, which was to be one of a number; and, after an unsatisfactory carrying out of his design by other hands, he set to work in earnest to produce or procure good colored glass, and do the work himself. Much of the window now in place is made of his own material. We give an outline of it (Fig. 1), and also of one of the remaining studies for the other windows not yet done (Fig. 2). Reproductions of the other two designs will be found in *Scribner's Monthly* for February, in an article on La Farge by Mr. G. P. Lathrop. On entering into the practical business of making the colored pot-metal, Mr. La Farge found himself again confronted, as all modern makers have been, by the difficulty of obtaining the richness and tone so observable in ancient glass. The Munich artists, as already pointed out, tried to obviate this difficulty by using a backing of enamel of the color and consistency of pea-soup. Many English makers purposely dirtied their work with a smear of brown paint and wax. La Farge returned to the idea he had had of making use of the opal glass. This in its chemical composition is the same as the opaque white glass, known as fusible porcelain. Phosphate of lime (bone-dust), peroxide of tin, or arsenic, are the coloring matters. The arsenic gives the shifting orange tinge which simulates the fire of the opal. If evenly mixed in the melting-pot, and not pressed, any or all of these ingredients would only give a plain opaque white, or, if subjected to an even pressure, a milky white glass, slightly tinged with orange if the arsenic is used; but if corrugated or rolled by hand, different degrees of translucency and a shifting play of color are produced, which render the material invaluable to the glass-stainer. The opal "body" can be used in positive-colored glass with somewhat of the same result as if it were backed up with opal glass. Used as a color among others, it takes the place of the mediæval nacreous white, and gives value to all

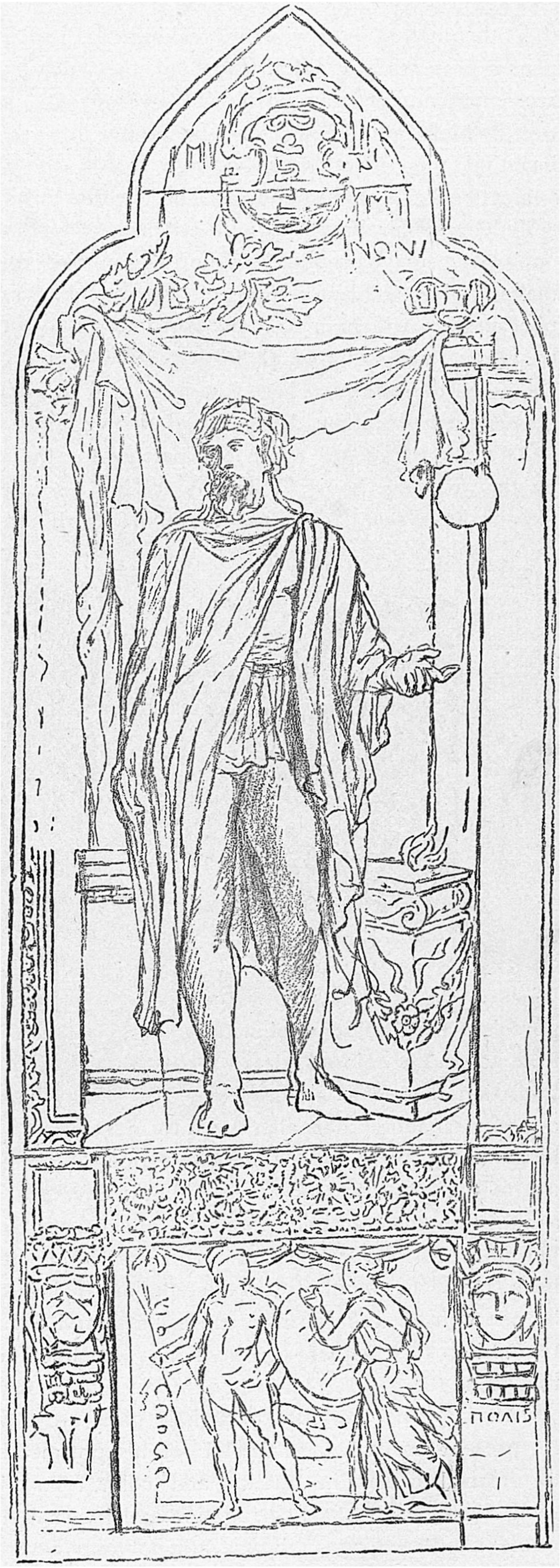


Fig. 2.—Fac-simile of Study for Harvard Memorial Window.

By John La Farge.—Drawn by Charles Mettais.

the other colors in a window, making the red redder, etc., serving, when properly chosen, as a pearly gray with a slight tinge of the complementary. Small window-screens of glass mosaic are sometimes entirely lined with opal, for the purpose of breaking and diffusing the direct sun-rays, which would otherwise penetrate into the room in pencils of colored light. However beautiful this effect may be high up in the vaulted roof of a cathedral, it may be inconvenient in a dwelling-house. The "warm gules" may not always, as in Keats's poem, fall on "Madeline's fair breast"; and patches of prismatic colors wandering across one's pictures or one's face may produce an impression the reverse of agreeable. The outer casing of opal makes it impossible for this to happen, and gives the colored glass inside a richness and atmospheric effect which in itself is worth the added trouble. In very large work it cannot be said to render unnecessary all further experimenting towards getting the brilliant but deep-toned colors of the ancient glass, but it is still the most important addition to the *materiel* of the glass-stainer since the discovery of the yellow stain and of enamel colors.

Mr. La Farge has taken out patents for the manufacture of "opal"; it is also largely used by the firm of Louis C. Tiffany & Co., associated artists, under Mr. La Farge's patent. Some glass-stainers say it does not harmonize with other glass, which is absurd. The opaque fusible porcelain may be so used with other glasses as to be very disagreeable, but it is quite impossible to find a colored glass which cannot be harmonized with opal. It is admitted without contradiction that Mr. La Farge and Mr. Tiffany have preceded all others in the use of it, and have done much more than all others to develop it. Mr. La Farge's patent-rights, enforced, will be likely to be exercised for the protection of good work against such as may by their inartistic use of the material tend to lessen its value. It has always been possible to obtain opal glass as an imperfect fusible porcelain, and as such it may have been used over and over again; but until Mr. La Farge and Mr. Tiffany took it up, it does not appear that any effort had been made to regularly produce it, or to develop its peculiar qualities. It is entirely different in effect from the German milk glass, and even from the Venetian opal, which it most nearly resembles, for neither of these has its body or tone. It is an American contribution to the art.

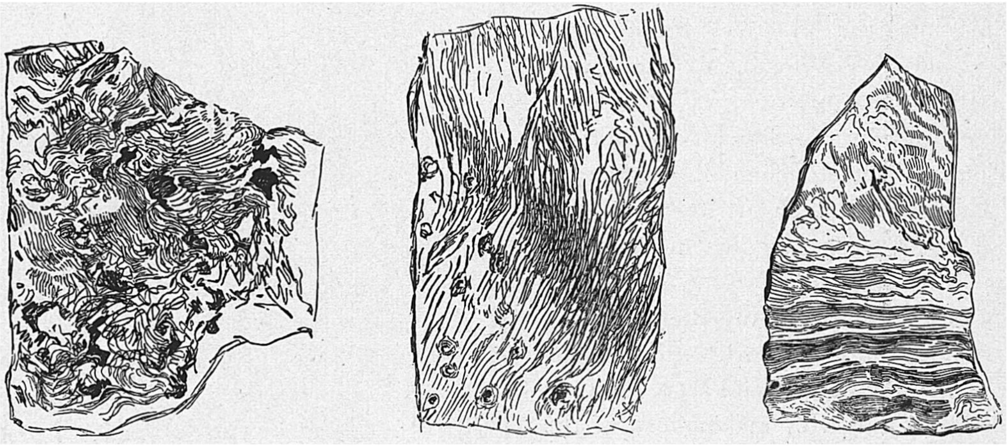
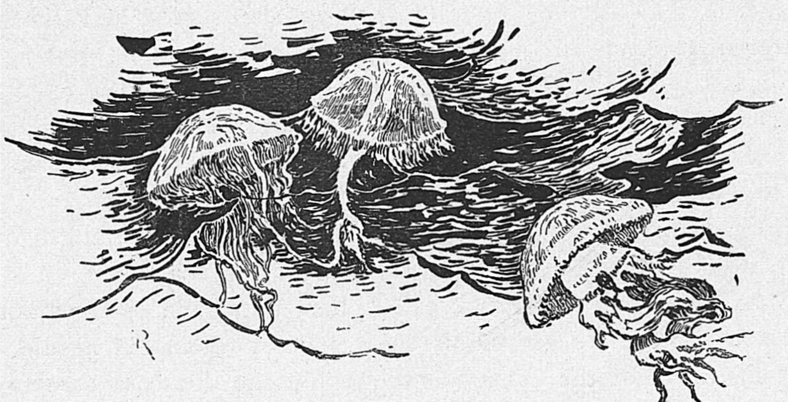


Fig. 3.—VARIETIES OF AMERICAN OPAL GLASS.

All the other varieties of artistic glass are now made here as well as anywhere in the world. At present no one goes abroad for his pot-metal; each makes it for himself, and does his best to outrival others in quality and color. To give a list of the various effects of iridescence, semi-opacity, of surface corrugation and internal stratification, of laminæ, fibres, striæ, and bubbles, would fill some pages. There are not only imitations of the old ruby, topaz, purple, etc., but there is also glass which imitates the chalcedony and the moss-agate, and glass which is inlaid or sprinkled with glass of another color. We have already, in our first article, given some illustrations, a reference to which will help to a conception of its diversities of texture, but the best which can be done with drawings and description combined must fail to convey an adequate idea to those who have not seen its many artistic qualities. Some of the effects produced in the melting-pot are extremely curious, and even picturesque. A piece of sprinkled glass may, for instance, show a very suggestive storm scene, — a mass of wind-swept twigs and branches in dark brown, the emerald leaves torn from them filling the sky, which, with its flying, shapeless clouds, is represented by the murky white foundation. Another variety of glass is of a dark sea-green, through which play long fibres of red, which seem to sway up and down, like seaweed in the waves, with the undulations of the rough surface. In this the red fibres are developed by heat to any length and degree of complexity. The glass when first made is entirely green. Glass has been made by Mr. Tiffany, for special purposes, over an inch in thickness; and rough-faceted glass, looking at a distance like the unpolished stones of Indian or old Gaulish jewelry, is much employed by him. It is, of course, extremely costly, but fairly solves the problem of richness.

R. RIORDAN.



DESIGNED BY R. RIORDAN.